trunk is much cracked and of a greyish colour; the young twigs are of a reddish green. The leaves are remarkable for the variety of their form on the same tree. Those which proceed first from the bud are usually oval and entire; the next have the same form with a lobe on one side; the last and most numerous have regularly three lobes. They grow on petioles, and are very downy when young, but become smoother by age. The flowers grow from the sides of the branches below the leaves, having the scales of the former bud for their floral leaves. They are disposed in short slender racemes of a pale green colour, each flower having six oblong segments. Different trees produce barren and perfect flowers. The barren flowers have nine stamens, six of which are exterior and three interior. The perfect flowers, the kind represented in our plate, have only six stamens, with short filaments and heart-shaped anthers. Nectary none. Germ roundish with a straight, erect style. Fruit an oval drupe of a deep blue colour, supported by a red incrassated pedicel. Only a small number of the trees produce fruit.

The bark of this tree has a fragrant smell and a very agreeable spicy taste. The flavour of the root is most powerful, that of the branches

more pleasant. The flavour and odour reside in a volatile oil which is readily obtained from the bark by distillation. It is of a light colour, becoming darker by age, very pungent, and heavier than water, so that it sinks in that fluid when the drops are sufficiently large to overcome the repulsion at the surface. The bark and pith of the young twigs abound with a pure and delicate mucilage. A very small quantity of the pith infused in a glass of water gives to the whole a ropy consistance, like the white of an egg. This mucilage has the uncommon quality that it is not precipitated, coagulated, or rendered turbid by alcohol. It continues in a perfectly transparent state when mixed with that fluid, though it does not unite with it. When evaporated to dryness, it leaves a light coloured, gum-like residuum.

The volatile oil and the mucilage appear to contain all the medicinal virtue of the tree.

The bark and wood of the Sassafras were formerly much celebrated in the cure of various complaints, particularly syphilis, rheumatism and dropsy. Its reputation, however, as a specific in those diseases, particularly the first, has fallen into deserved oblivion, while it is now recognized only with regard to its general properties, which are those of a warm stimulant and diaphoretic.

JACOB BIGELOW *American Medical Botany* BOSTON, 1817-1820 CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION, ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Octavo